FISHY-WINKLE

JEAN C. ARCHER

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From her Aunt Rosie

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Fishy-Winkle

BY

Jean C. Archer

Author of "Samuel and Selina"

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1903

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CHAPTER I.

Mistress O'Hara lives down by the sea,
A skittish and beautiful widow is she;
She has black shiny tresses, and curly buff toes,
And a heavenly tilt to the tip of her nose!

She has three little children, the eldest is four
(Nurse says he is naughty enough to be more);
The Twins are dear dumplings, and they and their brother
Are always in scrapes—
Of one kind, or another.

J.C.H.

This morning poor Mistress O'Hara
looks blue,
As indeed she has every reason to do;
For the third time this week Nurse
has come in to say,
"If you please 'm, the children have
all run away!"

"Oh! bother those children — well,
first let us look
In the larder, to see what provisions
they took;
If the pumpkin pie's gone, they are
off for the day,
If they only took raisins, they're not
far away."

J.C.A.

J. C. A.

They look in the larder, and what do you think?

Find nothing whatever to eat or to drink.

"Alack!" says the Cook; "it is just as I feared:

The whole of my dinner has clean disappeared."

"This is really too bad," says Mama, in a rage,
As she slips on her pattens and turns down the page
Of the book she is reading, and starts out to find
The darlings, to give them a piece of her mind!

She takes a big stick and makes tracks for the sea,
Where she's pretty well sure all the truants will be;
Yama-Guchi, she knows, leads the Twins by the nose,
And they patiently follow wherever he goes.

J.C.A.

S.C.A.

Sure enough, the first things that she
sees on the shore
Are footprints, and further on several
more—
And still further on there are two
little rows
Of shoes, and some other superfluous
clo'es.

But where are the children? The children are *gone ! !*

Oh! doesn't poor Mistress O'Hara take on!

She weeps and she wails and she tears out her hair,

And rolls on the sands in the depths of despair.

The sand it is gritty, the sand it is dry,

It scratches her nose and gets into her eye;

Her throat feels as if she had swallowed a peck,

And the rolling soon gives her a crick in her neck.

J.C.A

So she picks up her pattens, her stick and her fan,
And bundles her hair up as well as she can.
Next minute it all stands on end with surprise:
She stares and she stares, disbelieving her eyes—

For there, as if just newly dropped from the skies,
Are the children, all looking as chirpy as flies;
But what flabbergasts the poor lady the most
Is the sight of a MER-BABY, dumped on a post.

Such a queer little object she never has seen,
It has eyes big as saucers, all glazy and green;
A mere speck of a nose, scarcely raised from its face,
And a mouth that meanders all over the place.

Yama-Guchi is dancing and shouting with glee—
"Did you come from the earth, or the sky, or the sea?"
While the Twins, with amazement struck utterly dumb,
Stand solemnly gazing, each sucking a thumb.

J.C.A.

They implore it to speak, but they are not prepared
For the size of its mouth, and are horribly scared;
Making sure it is going to swallow them all—
Yet its voice when it speaks is quite squeaky and small.

"My name's Fishy-Winkle—I live in the sea,
To-day I played truant from school, for a spree;
But, oh! how I wish that I never had come,
For the tide has gone out and I cannot get home."

"Cheer up, Fishy-Winkle, and don't
make a fuss,
Get into the go-cart and run off
with us;
We've rations for dinner and also for
tea,
You will find it *much* nicer than under
the sea."

They bring up the go-cart and Fishy
jumps down.
"The more haste, the less speed," for
he falls on his crown;
No matter, he's in now; they're off
and—Houp La!
They are soon out of reach of their
furious Ma!

J.C.H.

J. C. A

CHAPTER II.

See Fishy-Winkle drive in state
  Across the shining sand;
With Yama-Guchi yoked in front,
  A Twin on either hand!

But soon each weary back is humped,
  And bowed each jetty pate;
For Fishy, though he looks so small,
  Is *not* a feather-weight!

At last they reach a cavern cool,
And sit down in a bunch,
Declaring they won't budge an inch,
Till they have had some lunch.

The food-stuffs are a trifle mixed,
From joggling in the cart;
There's jam spread on the slim sardine,
Salt on the pumpkin tart!

J.C.A.

J.C.A.

Right in the middle there appears
An unexpected guest;
Who kindly makes himself at home,
And feeds upon the best.

The children look at him with awe,
And whisper: "Who is that?"
"Why, don't you know?" says Fishy-Wink,
"That is the HADDOCK-CAT!"

The Haddock-Cat is very kind,
And when the meal is done
Cries: "Get upon my back, you four,
I'll take you for a run."

He crouches down upon the sand,
And up the children jump;
Then he gets up—contrairy wise,
The children fall down flump!!

J C A

J C X.

But nothing daunted, up they get,
And cling with might and main ;
I fear they must have caused that Cat
Con-si-der-able pain !

They joggled for a mile or more,
Then gasped out : " Th-that's enough :
We th-thank you kindly—now let's have
A game of Blind Man's Buff."

That *was* a game, the children shrieked
And laughed until they cried;
The Cat could never catch at all,
However hard he tried.

He chased them up, he chased them down,
He chased them all about;
He chased them round and round and round,
Until his strength gave out.

J.C.A.

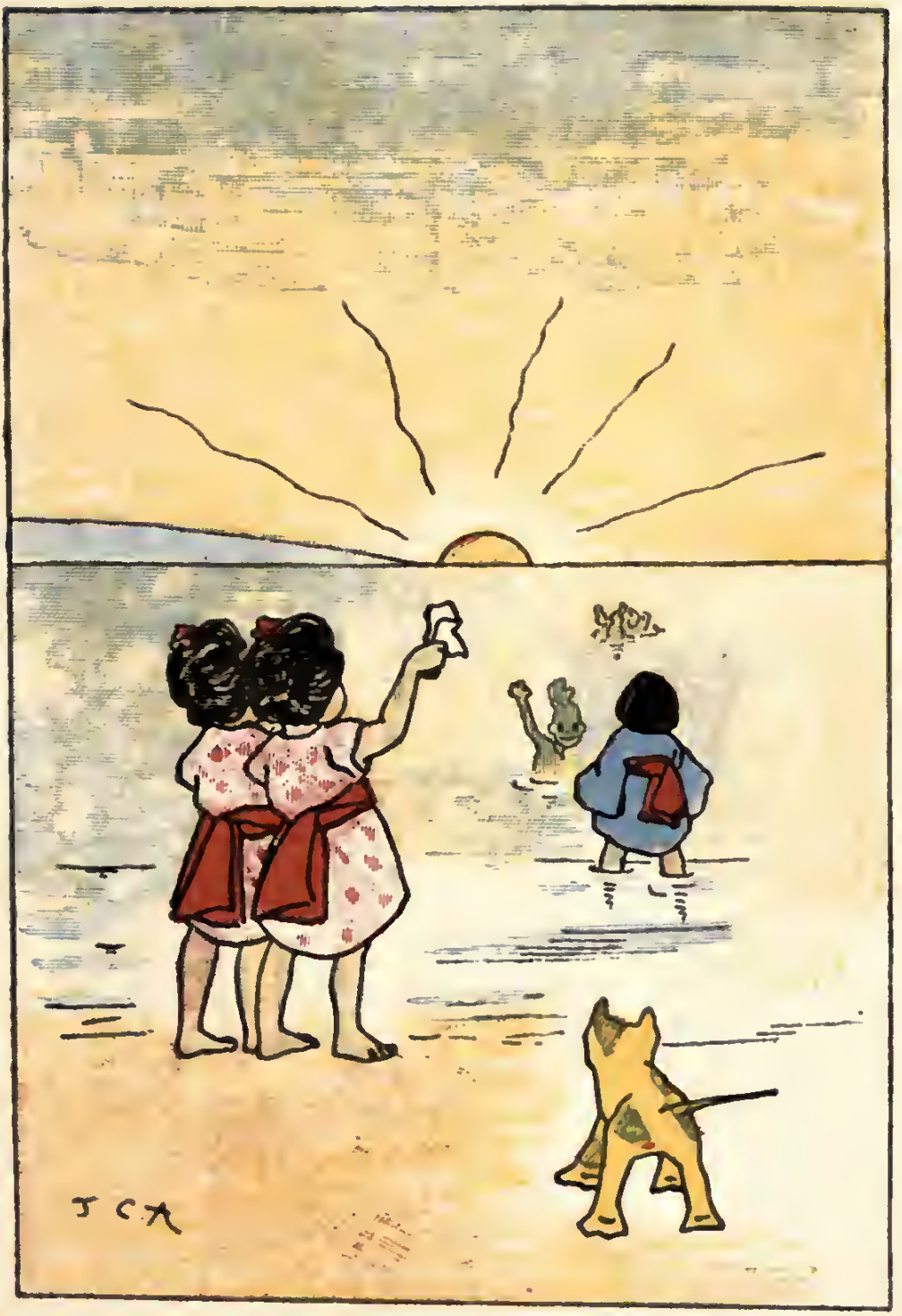
J C A.

They led him to a shady wood,
To sniff the cooling breeze,
And watch the poly-poddy frogs
A-jumping in the trees.

The frogs were shiny, fat and green;
They sat about in rows,
And held on to the branches by
Their multifarious toes!

While there they sat, a cheerful shout
Rang out across the sea ;
And Fishy-Winkle sighed and said :
" I guess they're calling me.

" The tide is in, my time is up,
I must go home again ;
My brothers six are beckoning me
Across the rolling main."



The children followed in his train
As far as they could get,
Until the water got too deep,
And all their clothes too wet.

"Be sure and come again," they cried,
"To play, some other day."
And Fishy waved a friendly hand,
From very far away.

CHAPTER III.

Mistress O'Hara has taken her stand,
With rage in her heart and a stick in her hand;
So fierce is her frown and so wild is her eye,
That poor Yama-Guchi feels ready to die.

JCA.

J C A.

Her patience is stretched to the end
of its tether,
She knocks all the heads of the chil-
dren together;
Then—when she's reduced them to
sorrow and tears—
She repents of her harshness—the
poor little dears!

She agrees to forget and forgive just once more,

And homewards they stroll by the sunshiny shore;

You can see by the picture how happy they look—

On the next page you'll see the effect on—

J C.A.

J.C.H.

the COOK!!